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South Melbourne
Hellas Soccer Club

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EDITORIAL

Bumper crowds mark revival

THERE WERE a few concerns that the break in the Ericsson Cup during January might have affected crowd attendance figures but judging by last weekend's bumper attendance the upwards spiral is set to continue.

And Soccer Australia have set an ambitious target for the remainder of the season with their estimate that total attendances will top the one million mark.

If that does happen it will be the first time ever that the million barrier has been broken.

The continued growth of the game is great news for fans in this country and if it continues in its present trend then we will soon be back to the figures set in the heyday of the NSL in those first few years when there was great optimism that soccer would really catch on - and why not?

We had participated at the 1974 World Cup finals and set new, and exciting, ground when the sport became the first national competition in this country.

Along the way there have been a few problems but it would seem, that despite a continuance of nagging issues, that this year is the real benchmark for summer soccer.

For the first time ever it would seem that the big switch to summer has paid off.

Now we are set to really reap the rewards; our Olyroos are well on the way to Atlanta '96, the Socceroos must be 'London to a brick' on to qualify for the next World Cup in France, then it is Sydney 2000 and then it looks as

if the 2002 World Cup will be in either Japan or Korea - when, unless they change the rules again, we will only have to beat the FIFTH best Asian country to qualify.

The J League and Korean clubs continue to bombard Australia with January/February pre-season training camp appearances which will shortly be turned into something major at club level.

How could you possibly be pessimistic about the future of the game?

Shortly we will get the official format for next season's competition but that looks to be really exciting if the rumours are true.

All up, it is a great time to be involved in the game.

Tonight's visit of Marconi-Fairfield should also see another bumper crowd at Bob Jane Stadium.

This season crowd figures have really lived up to the club's expectations and all sorts of records are being broken or are on sight.

Last weekend South Melbourne did Marconi a favour when its home win over UTS Olympic saw the Fairfields, with a win against Wollongong, shoot to the top of the Ericsson Cup.

But there will be no favours tonight as the Blue & White Army cheers its heroes onto what will be a very hard hard game - and another three points to continue that magnificent run of home ground success which stretches back to November.

Football isn't meant to be easy – *but don't tell Bill*

BILL DAMIANOS is a young footballer who is not only playing with confidence but is expressing it too.

The talented midfielder was just one of the many young guns drafted in by coach Frank Arok this season as he set about revitalising South Melbourne.

But you could be forgiven if you didn't realise when talking to Bill that he is still only eighteen – with his next birthday still a couple of months off.

"I'm confident in my own game," he says.

"It also helps getting a regular game, because you just grow in confidence with every match."

This season he has played in every game but two and already has a Johnnie Walker Cup trophy on his sideboard to show for his troubles.

He has also chipped in with two valuable goals and gives Arok's side some of the width that the guru likes.



AIR CHALLENGE: Bill Damianos wins this midfield battle against Brad Maloney and the midfield struggle could well be the telling point tonight against Marconi

"To be honest," adds Damianos, "I'd rather play in central midfield – but I'd play anywhere just to get a shirt."

"Except in goals, of course!"

At one stage, and with results not going according to plan, there was considerable pressure put on the club to start winning.

Everyone's job seemed to be on the line but surprisingly Bill Damianos shrugged most of that off.

"I never felt any real pressure," he says, "we always knew that we would get it going."

"Even with this present run I don't feel any great pressure, but we have to keep on winning."

"The coach has set us the target of winning at least 90% of our home games – and then we have to pick up a few away points as well."

"If we do that then we will make the Top Six – but I think that we will do that easily."

"We did have a bad start but it has

come right and I'm confident that we can go on from here."

At the start of the season the amount of new faces in the line up caused the usual problems with playing styles not gelling together.

"The Top Six – we'll make that easily"

And even now the club has signed a few more players but this time there has been no set-back.

"No, we have all adapted well," says Damianos.

"We should have Nick Orlic in the side today and he will probably play in the stopper role if he is signed in time."

"And then there is also the possibility of Kevin Muscat being released from the Socceroo camp for the game against Marconi."

"I know that the club is trying to

arrange it, but the whole squad has adapted well and we will be all right."

Last week Bill & Co. took three points off league leaders UTS Olympic and tonight they have the chance to play ditto when the new leaders, Marconi, come under scrutiny.

That is a hard double act for any side but don't talk to Bill Damianos of mounting pressure – he just scoffs at that.

He does concede that the game itself won't be easy, though.

"It is a very tough ask," he admits. "But we'll do it."

Maybe Bill isn't old enough to feel the pressure being heaped on the club by its demanding fans.

But he is old enough to know just how much the Blue & White Army can lift a winning team.

You get the feeling that he kind of likes that – and that he intends liking it all the way to the Ericsson Cup Grand Final.

Bruce Campbell

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PUMA

They're not going to Atlanta

SOUTH MELBOURNE'S Kevin Muscat might have done well enough in the recent Oceania Olympic qualifiers in Adelaide but even if the Olyroos do get past the CONCACAF runners-up in the next stage he WON'T be going to Atlanta.

And just for the record, neither will any other South Melbourne player.

The reason?

Well, don't get too excited - it is simply because the soccer section of the 1996 Olympic Games WON'T be played in Atlanta - despite press reports to the contrary.

"The early stages will NOT be played in Atlanta," confirmed the US Olympic office when *Dunroon Publishing* contacted them recently.

"In fact NONE of the games will actually be played there.

"In the early groups games will be split up between Orlando, Miami, Washington and Birmingham (that's Alabama, not England) and then the finals will be played in Athens."

Despite the confusion over names Kevin Muscat (pictured right) put in an outstanding show against our Oceania opponents.

And despite the general scathing criticism of the lack of class of New Zealand, Fiji, Vanuatu and the Solomon Islands the Australian public may well have witnessed the start of the finest Australian Olympic side of all time.

Consequently places for the final squad will be keenly contested - especially with coach Eddie Thomson bringing back four over-age players.

"I'll assess what weaknesses we have



before I think about players," said Thommo recently.

"There were a few things I wasn't happy about in our play but everyone has had a chance to show what they could do.

"Don't read anything into that last game against New Zealand (the 0-1 loss).

"We had already qualified and I

played what was virtually our second string team to give everyone a good run - and even they only played at half pace."

Now Kevin Muscat will keep an anxious eye on the mailbox for his call up for the second stage of the Olympic Dream - the CONCACAF elimination games on May 26 and June 2.

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Big night set for Wednesday

SOUTH MELBOURNE'S decision to move into the brand new Bob Jane Stadium has been given an almost instant reward with the scheduling of next Wednesday's international against Japan.

"We are delighted to be asked to promote the game," says SM General Manager Peter Filopoulos.

"We have facilities which are second to none here and it is good that



Soccer Australia have recognised this.

"I am sure that our fans will come out in big

numbers to watch this game - especially as we

are playing against J League side JEF United

in the curtain raiser." And Kevin Muscat, who missed the weekend win over UTS Olympic because of suspension, might just make his Bob Jane debut against Japan after being drafted into the Soccerroo squad.

Blue skipper Paul Trimball (pictured centre) is also named in the squad and seems certain to line up in the midfield, especially after his brilliant display in the thrashing of New Zealand at Newcastle last year.

The game against Japan yesterday at Wollongong and the midweek fixture give Trimmers a chance to add to his meagre tally of 13 caps for Australia while prior to the game Muscat was sitting on the two game mark.

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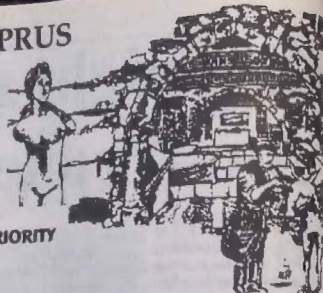
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BANK OF CYPRUS : A HUNDRED YEARS AHEAD

EVERYBODY involved with soccer in Australia is excited with the way that this year's inaugural Ericsson Cup has taken off - and Cup General manager Peter Russell is no exception.

"I'm very pleased with the attendance figures so far," says Russell.

"The extended season seems to have been well received by just about everybody in the game.

"I think that you would have to see it all as a success - so far."

Russell's caution is recognition that there is still a long, long way to go until the game achieves its ultimate potential as Australia's number one footballing code, but it is nevertheless looking very good.

Once again, however, changes to the league format are on the horizon and the word is that the Ericsson Cup will be increased to fourteen, or even sixteen, teams in time for next season's kick off.

Russell couldn't confirm any plans for next season with the SoccerOZ board still to wade their way through the record number of applications.

But he did give a hint when he talked about the possible number of games to be played.

"If the league competition, the Ericsson Cup, is expanded," he said, "I couldn't see three phases being played.

"It is more likely that two will be played and the Johnnie Walker Cup will be played in an expanded format."

That would likely see the Johnnie Walker Cup played as a regional mini-league before going into the

League Explosion



later knock-out stages.

Russell has long held the ambition to see the State League clubs added to the competition and with the early start, and early finish, of the major State Leagues it might well be that next season sees the start of this.

The revamping of the State / National League schedules might also be a precursor to a system of automatic promotion and relegation from the Ericsson Cup, another contentious point in the game.

Much of the speculation about just WHO will play in the league next season will also be answered shortly when the new teams are announced.

With the existing twelve looking likely to keep their places you would have to add the certainities Perth to the probabilities of Melbourne Warriors (Heidelberg United) or Melbourne Zebras.

The re-inclusion of another Melbourne based club would restore the imbalance between Sydney and Melbourne, always a topical point with NSL power brokers.

The interest from outside the traditional scope of the game is also a talking point with the hot rumour

going the rounds that Parramatta Eagles have done a deal with Parramatta Rugby League club.

That would probably see the Eagles play out of Parramatta Stadium, a venue that Soccer Oz would find hard to knock back.

The rumoured Aussie Rules and Brisbane Rugby League interest is unlikely to be treated seriously - it certainly isn't by the fans who just see it as another media beat-up.

But the real spanner in the works is the entry from Auckland.

Chairman David Hill has been keen to get a Kiwi team in but it is hard to see how their entry could be at the expense of an Aussie team, especially with so much interest being shown.

That might just indicate that the Ericsson Cup will leap to 16 teams which, if played in two phases on a home and away basis, would give each club thirty home games.

Add in another three likely Johnnie Walker Cup homers and then the knockout stages and Ericsson Top Six and it seems that we can look forward to an even bigger season next year - and that is great news for South Melbourne fans.



TOOHEYS BLUE



Hot Shots

ERICSSON CUP THE TOP MARKSMEN

13	Darren MORI (Adelaide City)
12	Frank FARINA (Brisbane Strikers)
12	Kris TRAJANOVSKI (UTS Olympic)
9	Paul WADE (Canberra Cosmos)
8	Andy HARPER (Marconi-Fairfield)
7	Rod BROWN (Brisbane Strikers)
7	Ivan KELIC (South Melbourne)
7	Paul TRIMBOLI (South Melbourne)
7	Jim TSEKINIS (West Adelaide)
7	Pablo CARDOSO (West Adelaide)
6	Warren SPINK (Morwell Falcons)
6	Kimron TALIADOROS (UTS Olympic)
5	Francis AWARITEFE (Marconi-Fairfield)
5	Ante MILICIC (Sydney United)

On The Card

ERICSSON CUP

ROUND 19

Saturday
Canberra Cosmos v Brisbane Strikers
Sunday
Sydney United v UTS Olympic
South Melbourne v Marconi-Fairfield
West Adelaide v Wollongong City (changed venue)
Re-scheduled Matches

Tuesday 5 March

Adelaide City v Newcastle Breakers

Wednesday 6 March

Morwell Falcons v Melbourne Knights

the next

**Ericsson Cup Matches
at Bob Jane Stadium**

v

Brisbane Strikers
Sunday, 25 February 1996
KICK OFF 7.00pm

v

Brisbane Strikers
Sunday, 25 February 1996
KICK OFF 7.00pm

1995/96 SOUTH MELBOURNE STATS

Best Crowd:
13,956 v West Adelaide (Home) - Round 9

Best Home Crowd:
13,956 v West Adelaide (Home) - Round 9

Total Home Crowds:
68,698 (9 games)

Average Home Crowd:
7,633

95/96 Ericsson Cup Top Crowd:
13,956 South Melbourne v West Adelaide - Round 9
*All figures are based on official ASF records and not those reported in the press.

ERICSSON CUP PLAYER APPEARANCES

05	Alsopp
15	Anastasiadis
14	Anthopoulos
09	Baser
07	Blatts
16	Coveny
01	Curcija
16	Damianos
07	Davison
05	Dunic
16	Kalic
01	Knezevic
16	Kuzmanovic
16	Lewis
02	Litakis
07	Mangos
13	Nikolic
15	Panopoulos
03	Papadopoulos
17	Petersen
01	Pelkovic
12	Sherifovski
17	Trimboli
11	Valkaria

TOTAL: 24 players

GOAL SCORERS:

07	Ivan KELIC
07	Paul TRIMBOLI
04	Steve PANAPOULOS
03	Vaughan COVENY
02	Bill DAMIANOS
01	Daniel ALSOPP
01	Con BLATIS
01	Craig LEWIS
01	Steve MANGOS
01	Agim SHERIFOVSKI



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THE BLUES SQUAD

- 1 Dean Anastasiadis
- 2 Con Blatsis
- 3 Steve Mangoe
- 4 Alek Kuzmanovic
- 5 Mike Valkanis
- 6 Con Anthopoulos
- 7 Steve Panopoulos
- 8 Vaughan Coveney
- 9 Paul Trimboli (C)
- 10 Ivan Kelic
- 11 Agim Sherifovski
- 12 Bill Damianos
- 13 Craig Lewis
- 14 Michael Petersen
- 15 Jean-Paul Knezevic
- 16 Tansell Baser
- 17 Sasa Nikolic
- 18 Michael Curcija
- 19 Daniel Alsopp
- 20 Michael Liliakis
- 21 Aleksander Duric
- 22 Kevin Muscat
- 23 Michael Petkovic
- 24
- 25
- 26 George Tsianakas
- 27
- 28
- 29

LIKELY LINE-UP

PETKOVIC

BASER

BLATIS

DAMIANOS

KUZMANOVIC

KNEZEVIC

PETERSEN

COVENY

PANOPOULOS

TRIMBOLI

ALSOPP

COACH: Frank Arok

LAST SIX LEAGUE HOME GAMES

- v UTS Olympic (4.2.96) WON 2-1
v Wollongong City (29.12.95) WON 6-0
v Adelaide City (23.12.95) WON 2-0
v Morwell Falcons (16.12.95) DREW 2-2
v Melbourne Knights (10.12.95) WON 1-0
v Newcastle Breakers (6.12.95) WON 3-1

LAST SEASON:

South Melbourne 2 Marconi - Fairfield 0

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MARCONI

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LIKELY LINE-UP

CATLIN

LONGO

STANTON

de MARIGNY

SOURIS

CASSERLY

MALONEY

SMITH

HRISTODOULOU

AWARITEFE

HARPER

COACH: Manfred Schaefer

THE STALLION SQUAD

- Bob Catlin 1
- Gary van Egmond 2
- Jean Paul de Marigny 3
- Robbie Stanton 4
- Matthew Bingley 5
- Luke Casserly 6
- Andy Harper 7
- Eric Hristodoulou 8
- Ramon Clement 9
- Brad Maloney 10
- Mike Smith 11
- Jon Angelucci 12
- Aaron Holst 13
- Nick Bosevski 14
- 15
- Darren McDonald 16
- Francis Awaritefe 17
- Paul Souris 18
- Brendan Renaud 19
- Leslie Pogliacomi 20
- Andrew Ravello 21
- Dominic Longo 22
- 23
- 24
- 25
- 26
- 27
- 28


LAST SIX LEAGUE AWAY GAMES

- v Canberra Cosmos (6.1.96) WON 3-1
v Morwell Falcons (26.12.95) WON 4-1
v Newcastle Breakers (15.12.95) WON 2-0
v UTS Olympic (26.11.95) DREW 0-0
v Wollongong (10.11.95) LOST 0-2
v Adelaide City (29.10.95) WON 2-0

CURRENT FORM: The Blues are on song after outsmarting UTS Olympic last weekend but face the highly rated Marconi in what is sure to be a tough game. If Longo and de Marigny can bottle up Alsopp and Trimboli then they might have a chance - otherwise I'll go for a South Melbourne one goal win.

EASIER



ERICSSON  **MOBILE PHONES**

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BIG MATCH RESULTS

ERICSSON CUP

ROUND 18

Friday 2 February

Newcastle Breakers 1 (Stewart 80)

Morwell Falcons 2 (o.g. 20, Villani)

Venue: Breakers Stadium

Att: 3,971 Referee: B Hugo

Saturday 3 February

Brisbane Strikers 7 (Dillon 18, Farina 34, 50, 52, R

Brown 46, 48, Polak 76)

Adelaide City 1 (Hassell 89)

Venue: SunCorp Stadium

Att: 4,880 Referee: M Shield

Marconi-Fairfield 3 (Awarteh 44, Harper 58, pen 64)

Wollongong City 1 (Jermen 40)

Venue: Marconi Stadium

Att: 3,513 Referee: C Dionis

Sunday 4 February

South Melbourne 2 (Coveny 29, Trimball 81)

UTS Olympic 1 (Trajanovski 82)

Venue: Bob Jane Stadium

Att: 10,127 Referee: G Connolly

Melbourne Knights 0

Sydney United 0

Venue: Croatian Sports Centre

Att: 5,830 Referee: E Brazzale

West Adelaide 2 (Tsakinis 46, Ndongo-Keller 85)

Canberra Cosmos 1 (Castro 37)

Venue: Hindmarsh Stadium

Att: 3,516 Referee: W Dade

National Youth League

Round 18

Altona Magic 1 Port Melbourne 1

North Geelong 0 Morwell Falcons 9

Melbourne Knights 5 Springvale City 1

VIS 0 South Melbourne 4

Played Midweek:

Melbourne Zebras v Green Gully

Heidelberg United v Bulleen

Ericsson Cup

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Marconi-Fairfield	18	11	4	3	33	18	37
UTS Olympic	18	10	5	3	34	19	35
Brisbane Strikers	18	10	2	6	32	20	32
Sydney United	18	6	7	5	24	15	31
Melbourne Knights	18	6	5	7	18	12	29
West Adelaide	18	8	4	6	25	22	28
Morwell Falcons	18	7	3	8	23	30	24
South Melbourne	18	7	2	9	28	31	23
Adelaide City	18	6	4	8	27	27	22
Canberra Cosmos	18	5	5	8	27	29	20
Newcastle Breakers	18	2	4	12	15	36	10
Wollongong City	18	3	1	14	13	40	10

3 points for a win, 1 point for a draw

National Youth League

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
South Melbourne	16	19	4	2	45	34	15
Melbourne Knights	16	10	3	3	50	30	33
Green Gully	15	11	0	4	34	26	33
VIS	15	8	3	4	42	21	27
Bulleen Lions	15	8	3	4	29	18	27
Heidelberg United	14	6	4	4	31	26	23
Springvale City	16	5	6	5	24	31	21
Morwell Falcons	15	6	2	7	41	37	20
Altona Magic	16	4	2	10	15	33	14
North Geelong	16	1	2	13	9	61	5
Port Melbourne	14	1	0	13	13	34	3

*midweek results not included

ERICSSON CUP NOTICE

Entry inside the perimeter fence of the playing area is prohibited at all times and offenders will be prosecuted. All spectators are requested to vacate the ground within 15 minutes of the end of the final game. Police may be requested to remove any unauthorised persons who remain after the stipulated time. The setting alight of, or the igniting or discharging of any type of object, including fireworks, signal or smoke flares, is strictly prohibited.

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H v UTS Olympic (6.04.96)
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